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ABSTRACT

To gain greatest meaning and satisfaction from their work activities, persons should be able to more accurately identify and define their feelings, attitudes, and values related to the world of work. An expanded and enhanced understanding of occupational expectations on the part of career counselors would help in working with youth and adults who are facing the problems of career choice or rechoice. The Occupational Expectations Inventory developed in this study is offered as a device for diagnosing and clarifying expectations, values, and ethics. The study involved the identification of types or components of occupational expectations, the evolution of a classification system for those expectations, and an assessment of occupational expectations based on the likelihood of a specific occupational expectation resulting from an occupation and the desirability and importance of that expectation, and the correlation of those values with certain other factors such as social class, high school curriculum, sex, and other variables. (Author/AJ)

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OCCUPATIONAL EXPECTATIONS--
Nature, Correlates, and Utilization in Occupational Education

by

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1973

OCCUPATIONAL EXPECTATIONS--
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"The times--they are a' changing." So go the words of a contemporary ballad by Simon and Garfunkle. Indeed, change appears to be the mode of our society and culture.

Changes in our physical milieu abound. With man's footprints on the moon, energy crises, and automotive styling which is new today but obsolete tomorrow, change appears to be inevitable.

But change also occurs in the affective aspects of human nature. Attitudes change. Values change. Expectations change. With changes in physical surroundings, man searches for new or rekindled meanings for his existence, social structures, life styles, and activities in work and leisure. Change is evident and inevitable in work values, work ethics, and in the expectations that persons hold for gainful work careers.

It is not that values, per se, change, but rather the rank ordering or priorities in values that change. Throughout history, man has given value to acquiring money and material goods, to obtaining satisfaction from human activity, to being of service to his fellowman, or to expressing religious meaning in his very existence. These are but a few examples of the continuing existence of values, per se. The point is that the spectrum of the number of kinds or types of values remains static while the magnitude of importance for differing values changes over time. For example, Roman Catholics, up until the 1700's, considered the lending of money for the sake of making money to be a mortal sin. Because of the actions of Luther and Wesley, the contemporary work ethic condones, nay, encourages, the practice of usury. Similarly, economic competition--sometimes at the expense of the environment--which was sanctioned in the "traditional" Protestant Work Ethic as being "Godly" has been questioned and subsequently attacked by many young persons in our contemporary society as being unacceptable. Consequently, work activities which improve, or at least maintain, a natural ecological balance, and work ethics of service to mankind appear to be held in higher esteem than economic gain. This is not to say that economic gain is not valued--it is just allocated a lesser position in a person's heirarchy of values.

The "generation gap," so often characterized as an inability to communicate, may be more accurately defined as a conflict between differing heirarchies of values. The conflict is often subsequently entrenched by an "older" generation's attempt to inculcate their work ethic into a "younger" generation.

Awareness and understanding of the phenomenon of changing and differing work ethics are especially important to two groups of persons. The first group includes youth and adults who are attempting to enter or function more satisfactorily within the world of work. To gain greatest meaning and satisfaction from their work activities, persons should be able to more accurately identify and define their feelings, attitudes, and values as related to the world of work.

The second group includes career counselors, teachers, curriculum developers, placement personnel, recruitment personnel, work supervisors, personnel management, and others who continuously work with youth and adults who are attempting to select or reselect, prepare for, enter, and progress within an occupational career.

But the question remains as to how to identify and clarify work values. How may a person go about searching out and analyzing personal work ethics? What are the theoretical frameworks and operational procedures that can be utilized by occupational educators and personnel managers as they attempt to be of greater service to persons functioning within the world of work. One approach to analyzing work values and work ethics is through the identification and value determination of expectations.

The Nature of Expectations

The phenomenon of expectations has long been considered an important energizer and determiner of behavior. In 1932, Tolman conducted and reported research with lower mammals as it related to the nature of human expectations. If persons expect desired outcomes, the behavior which produces that outcome will be enacted. Conversely, the expectation of negative outcomes tends to produce avoidance behaviors.

Similarly, the phenomenon of occupational expectations is believed to have a marked influence on occupational behaviors. Such occupational behaviors as choosing an occupation, engaging in occupational training, entering a job, and finding job satisfaction are energized and shaped by positive and negative occupational expectations.

The Study

In an initial attempt to provide persons with an understanding and working knowledge of the nature and correlates of the occupational expectations, a developmental and descriptive study was conducted. The study involved the identification of types or components of occupational expectations, the evolution of a classification system for those expectations, and an assessment of occupational expectations based on the likelihood or probability of a specific occupational expectation resulting from or occurring within an occupation or job and the desirability and importance of that expectation, and the correlation of those values with certain other factors such as social class, high school curriculum, sex, and other variables.

Components

Through a review of literature, 26 components or types of occupational expectations were identified. These components are as follows:

1. Accomplishment. The component of accomplishment involves a person's feelings of achievement such as the cognitive, affective, and physical returns to the inner self.

2. Creativity. This component involves a person's desire to create or recreate something new, unique, or personal.

3. Competence. Feelings of competence involve the psychological and ego need to feel adequate in performing job function such as the mastery of job tasks, meeting rigid standards of production, or adequately meeting physical or mental challenges.

4. Safety. The component of safety involves the desire for self-preservation and freedom of the threat of physical or emotional harm. Examples include working near radioactive material, being free of severe emotional stress, or working within the proximity of explosive materials.

5. Life Style. The component of life style involves the mode of living that a job allows a worker to enjoy. Examples include residing in the suburbs, having sufficient energy after a days work to enjoy leisure activities, or being able to remain unshaven.

6. Advancement. The component of advancement involves expectations as to a worker's upward mobility in terms of increases in responsibility, authority, remuneration, or more desirable work functions or work environment.

7. Activity. This component involves having something of a productive nature with which to utilize one's energies. Often financially secure persons and retired persons feel the need for "something to do" which can be expected from paid or volunteer work.

8. Affective Aspects. This component includes the emotional involvement and reactions that worker has with his job, fellow workers, or other parts of the work environment. Anger, happiness, frustration, and anxieties are examples of affective aspects.

9. Identity. Many persons claim identity through their job or occupation such as being a member of a profession, being a member of a labor union, or being on a college faculty.

10. Security. Security involves a worker's assurance of continuous employment and thus not having to worry about food, clothing, shelter, or other basic physical or emotional needs. Examples include having a job with a sound and reliable company, having good hospitalization and sickness benefits, or having a good retirement fund.

11. Glamour. Being an airline stewardess, movie star, test pilot, or race car driver are often seen as glamorous occupations. The component of glamour is couched in a person's perception of how others view a job as being exciting or adventurous.

12. Altruism. Altruistic expectations include helping and being needed by other people, such as providing medical help or reducing suffering.

13. Status. The component of status is a worker's feeling of prestige or self-worth as viewed by his family, friends, and the community as a whole.

14. Comradeship. The affiliation motive of comradeship is exemplified by being part of a team, being part of a union, or being part of an "off hours" cliche.

15. Power. The component of power involves the feeling and knowledge of earned influence within a global framework, on persons or objects.

16. Authority. Having military authority over persons of subordinate rank, supervisory control over subordinates, or directing activities or production are examples of a legal or granted influence on other persons within a defined organizational structure.

17. Supervision. The component of supervision involves being guided, directed, or reprimanded in work activities. Examples include lack of supervision, being closely watched and monitored at all times, or receiving feedback as to the quality and quantity of work being done.

18. Responsibility. Expectations regarding the component of responsibility involve being held accountable for the quality and quantity of work efforts of one's self or others.

19. Inter-Personal Proximity. This component involves the degree of propinquity that a worker has with other persons in performing job activities. Giving hypodermic injections, doing dental work, fitting clothing, and working in crowded conditions are examples.

20. Remuneration. Remuneration involves the financial aspects of gainful employment such as the existence and degree of pay, monetary fringe benefits, and other financial considerations.

21. Time Frame. The time frame of a job includes such things as reporting to work at a certain time each day, working during evening hours, working on a night shift, or being able to schedule one's own hours of work.

22. Physical Environment. The physical work setting of a job includes such things as working indoors, in dusty conditions, at a desk, or in poor lighting.

23. Physical Activity. The physical activity of job functions may include such examples as lifting, typewriting, sewing, driving, shoveling, and similar job functions requiring some degree of physical strength or coordination.

24. Mental Activity. This component involves the recall or utilization of information necessary to execute specific job activities.

25. Personal Physical Standards. This component involves the physical appearance or requirements necessary to execute the job functions such as being physically attractive, having physical strength, or wearing appropriate clothing or paraphernalia for uniformity, identification, or safety.

26. Autonomy. This component of job freedom involves a worker's desire to be relatively independent in work activities as related to certain job parameters. Examples include the freedom to determine a person's own work activities, working hours, and responsibilities and rewards.

Modes of Occupational Expectations

The above 26 components of occupational expectations were viewed as falling into four general categories or modes of occupational expectations. As shown in Figure 1, these modes are based on the relationships that a worker has with (a) his job, (b) himself, (c) other persons on the job, and (d) other persons outside the job.

The first mode involves the relationships that a person has with himself through his job or occupation. Expectations of this mode regard an occupation as a process through which a person may obtain other outcomes which transcend the job, per se. For example, a worker may expect feelings of accomplishment through the process of working on the job, but not because of the mere existence

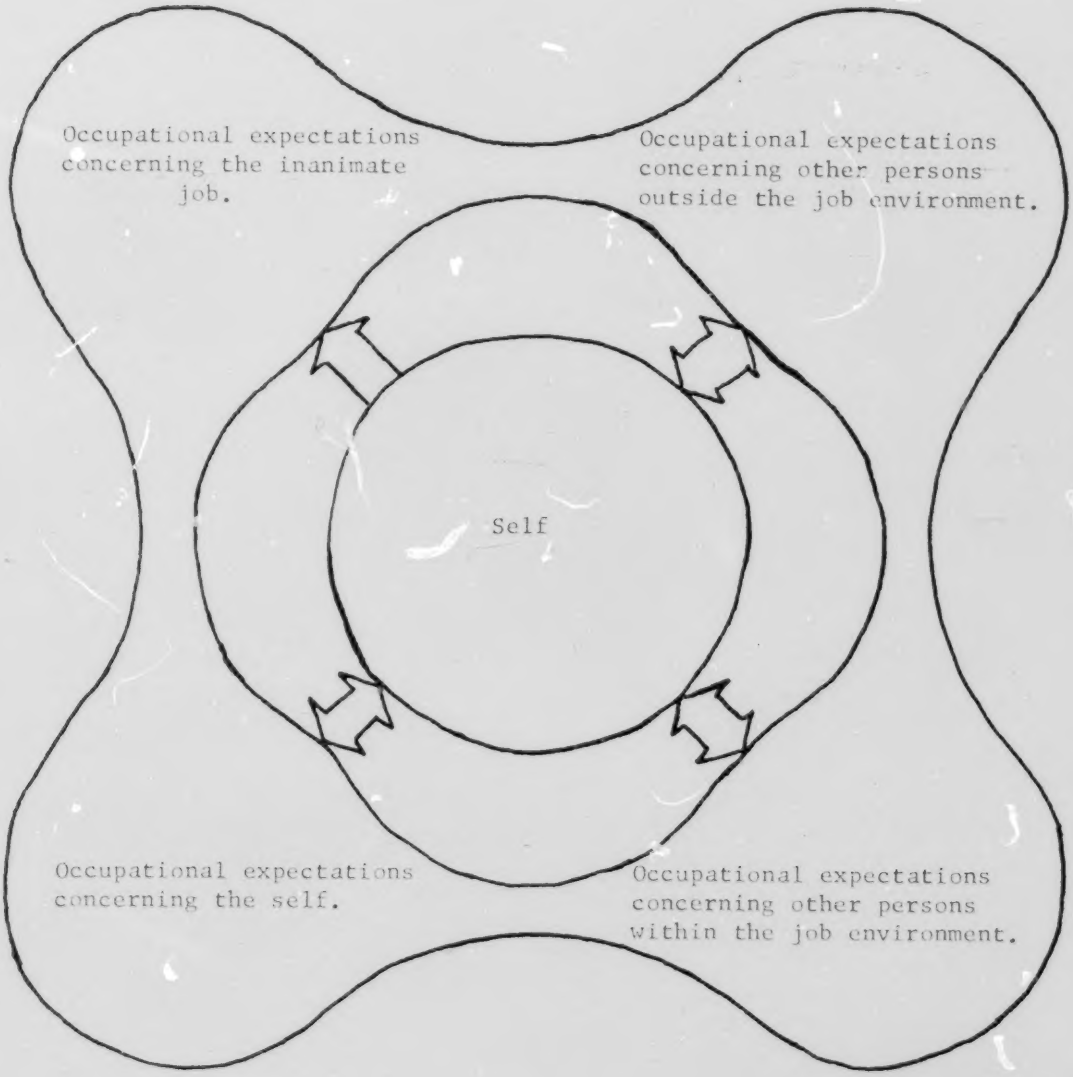
Occupational expectations concerning the inanimate job.
Occupational expectations concerning other persons outside the job environment.
Self
Occupational expectations concerning the self.
Occupational expectations concerning other persons within the job environment.

FIGURE 1 - The Four Modes of Occupational Expectations

of the job, per se. Expectations of this mode may be emotional or affective in nature, such as feelings of competence and achievement. Specific occupational expectations components of this mode include Components one through eight above.

The second mode involves the relationships that a person has to other persons who are outside the job environment. Such persons include family, friends, neighbors, clients, customers, and society as a whole. Components within this mode include nine through 13 above.

The third mode involves the workers' relationships to other persons within the working environment. Within this mode, the job serves as a vehicle through which inter-personal relationships may occur such as comradeship, supervision, and others. Components 14 through 19 above relate to this mode of occupational expectations.

The fourth mode involves a worker's relationship to the inanimate job itself. This mode deals with the job as an end product in itself, and expectations tend to be physical and tangible in nature. Components 20 through 26 above are examples of this mode of occupational expectations.

Occupational Expectations Inventory

To assess the relative value between differing occupational expectations, an Occupational Expectations Inventory (OEI) was prepared. Using the 26 components of occupational expectations described above, 32 specific items of occupational expectations were prepared. These 32 items are shown in Figure 2. The items, eight within each of the four modes, were arranged randomly on the inventory.

To respond to the inventory, each pupil was asked to record, on a five-point scale, the likelihood or probability of that specific occupational expectation item being part of or resulting from their desired job. Each pupil similarly recorded the desirability and importance of each item.

To analyze the responses, the sum of the indicated desirability and importance, termed the "valence," was multiplied times the indicated probability. The resultant bit of data was termed as "expectational product." Within each of the four modes, the appropriate eight expectational products were summed to produce a subscore on the OEI.

The Survey

The Occupational Expectations Inventory, together with a pupil data questionnaire shown in Figure 3 and the Sims Social Class Indicator Occupational Rating Scale, was administered to 621 high school seniors in a stratified random sample of 10 high schools in eastern-central Illinois. The data obtained were analyzed using two-way and three-way analysis of variance with repeated measures and the Newman-Keuls Cell Mean Differences Analysis procedures.

Findings

Analyses of the statistical computations resulted in the following observations and interpretations.

A. The Occupational Expectations Inventory was found to produce a reliability value of 0.94 which indicates that the instrument tends to be a viable and accurate means of measuring a person's occupational expectations.

B. The existence of the quadra-modal classification of occupational expectations shown in Figure 1 was confirmed as evidenced by differences between cell means for the four subtests of the OEI which were significantly different at the 0.0001 level. This quadra-modal model can serve as a viable theoretical structure for classifying and analyzing occupational expectations.

C. The four modes of occupational expectations were placed in rank order from highest to lowest magnitude of expectancy, i.e., composite of probability, desirability and importance. The rank ordering was as follows:

1. Occupational expectations concerning a person's relationship to himself through the job or occupation.

2. Occupational expectations concerning a person's relationship with other persons who are outside the job environment.

3. Occupational expectations concerning a person's relationship with other persons within the job environment.

4. Occupational expectations concerning a person's relationship to the inanimate job, per se.

The above rank ordering tends to indicate that young people, i.e., persons between 17 and 19 years of age, tend to place more value on a job or occupation as a process rather than as a product. The mode of occupational expectations which deal with a person's relationship with himself view the job as a process through which a person facilitates or realizes expectations for and of self. In essence, young people appear to be placing greater value on their relationships with themselves and with other persons, and lesser value on the job in and of itself. This finding appears to be a move away from the traditional Protestant Work Ethic which holds basically that the job itself is of primary importance, and that rewards or beneficial outcomes from the process of working would be delayed and postponed.

The rank ordering also indicates the social concern of young people. They tend to be more altruistic and want to be of benefit and service to their fellowman, i.e., persons outside the immediate job environment.

Intensity of expectancies on the OEI was compared with certain other independent variables. Statistically significant differences, at the 0.02 level, were found between the four subscores of the OEI and categories of the four following selected independent variables. Data on these variables were collected using a pupil data questionnaire. The categories of each variable are listed in decreasing order of degree of expectancy and value indicated by the high school pupils.

MY JOB WILL.....

1. ...let me be accepted by a desired group of fellow workers.
2. ...cause me to become angry and frustrated at times.
3. ...require that I work during certain hours.
4. ...have clean and orderly surroundings.
5. ...let me help others.
6. ...hold me responsible for the work of others.
7. ...be respected by my friends and neighbors.
8. ...help make a better world.
9. ...involve work activities that will be supervised.
10. ...be done mostly outdoors.
11. ...require certain physical standards (wearing a uniform, being neat and clean, being a certain height, etc.).
12. ...require that I work closely with a few other workers (on a medical team, in a small office, etc.).
13. ...be made up of persons who, as a group, have influence in the community.
14. ...help me advance to a better job.
15. ...be looked down upon by my family.
16. ...hold me responsible for the work I would do.
17. ...be considered glamorous and exciting by my friends.
18. ...have times during the day when there is no work to do.
19. ...be dangerous, at times, to my health and well-being.
20. ...demand that I do the best that I can.
21. ...involve mostly mental work (working with ideas, decisions, numbers, etc.).
22. ...give me a sense of accomplishment.
23. ...pay more than the average job.
24. ...require that I work closely with clients or customers.
25. ...allow me to determine my own hours of work and work activities.
26. ...allow me to be creative on the job.
27. ...let me live the way I want to live away from the job.
28. ...result, at times, in disagreements with fellow workers.
29. ...place me in control over the job activities of others.
30. ...require certain physical abilities and skills (playing a musical instrument, driving a car, etc.).
31. ...be secure, and could continue for many years.
32. ...include workers that I like and admire.

Figure 2--Items on the OCCUPATIONAL EXPECTATIONS INVENTORY

QUESTIONNAIRE
(All information will be kept confidential)

Male ( ) Female ( )

What job or career are you thinking about or are planning on entering?

_____

When do you expect to start work on this job?

( ) 0 to 3 months after I graduate from high school.
( ) 3 months to 1 year after high school graduation.
( ) 1 to 2 years after high school graduation.
( ) 2 to 4 years after high school graduation.
( ) 4 or more years after high school graduation.
( ) I am working on the job now.

During your high school years, have you been taking classes that would help you get into college and get a bachelor's degree?
No ( ) Yes ( ) If YES, please list the specific classes.

1. _____ 4. _____
2. _____ 5. _____
3. _____ 6. _____

During your high school years, have you been taking classes that would help you get a job or get into a school which would give you vocational training?
No ( ) Yes ( ) If YES, please list the specific classes.

1. _____ 4. _____
2. _____ 5. _____
3. _____ 6. _____

Have you ever worked on any job before? No ( ) Yes ( )

If YES:
Was it full time ( ) or part time ( )?

What was the job? _____

Who was your employer? _____

How long did you work there? _____

Please list other jobs you have held on the back side of this form.

Figure 3--Pupil Data Questionnaire

D. Curriculum in which enrolled.

1. College preparation.
2. Combination of college preparation and occupational preparation.
3. Occupational preparation.
4. General.

E. Occupational field of occupations desired by pupils.

1. Health-oriented occupations.
2. Professional occupations.
3. Other occupations not classified elsewhere.
4. Agriculturally oriented occupations.
5. Industrially oriented occupations.
6. Business, office, and distributive occupations.
7. Undecided as to occupational choice.

F. The expected time, following graduation from secondary school, when full-time employment would begin in the occupation desired.

1. Part-time experience related to the occupation desired.
2. Full time, less than three months duration, not occupationally related.
3. Full time, more than three months duration, not occupationally related.
4. Part time, more than three months duration, not occupationally related.
5. No employment experience.
6. Full time, more than three months duration, not occupationally related.
7. Part time and related to the occupation desired.

H. The sex of the pupil failed to serve as a significant independent variable for the analysis of occupational expectations. One observation, however, was that females tended to have larger cell means than males for expectations within the two modes dealing with a person's relationship with other persons, either persons within or outside the job environment. Conversely, males had larger cell means than females for occupational expectations within the remaining two modes which dealt with a person's relationship with an inanimate job and with self through the job.

I. The social class of the pupil, as measured by the Sims Social Class Indicator Occupational Rating Scale, also failed to serve as a viable independent variable for analyzing occupational expectations. The six categories of social class used in the study include (a) lower working, (b) working, (c) middle working, (d) middle, (e) upper middle, and (f) upper. One exception to this finding was that pupils in the lower working class, which was the lowest social class of the six, had a significantly smaller cell mean than did pupils in any of the other five categories.

J. Two categories of the size of enrollment of the secondary school in which the pupil was enrolled, less than and more than 500 pupils, did not have a statistically significant effect on occupational expectations.

In Conclusion

The results of this study are seen to be of value to many persons who work with youth and adults who are about to enter or have entered the world of work. It is hoped that the components of occupational expectations could serve as a basis for the development of core curriculums in occupational education. These components are seen to be common for all occupations, and can provide education regarding knowledges and attitudes which heretofore are largely unaddressed in occupational and continuing education.

Utilization of the 26 components and four modes of occupational expectations can serve as a basis for improved and expanded job descriptions. Research indicates that personnel recruited into business and industry via improved job descriptions and job analyses result in a lower turnover rate of personnel, enhanced motivation of personnel, and enhanced rapport due to more clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

An expanded and enhanced understanding of occupational expectations on the part of career counselors would help in working with youth and adults who are facing the problems of career choice and rechoice. The Occupational Expectations Inventory is offered as a device for diagnosing and clarifying expectations, values, and ethics.

Teachers of occupational subject-matter courses can enhance and motivate learner interest by relating instruction to specific occupational expectations possessed by an employee, employer, or both.

Additional research is needed on the pheromenon of occupational expectations. Research questions include determining the realism of occupational expectations held by persons at different stages of their lives; identifying the stages of development of occupational expectations through preschool, elementary school, secondary school, and post-secondary school years; and examining the changes which occur in a person's occupational expectations as a result of work experience. Through the use of the theoretical, content, and procedural bases contained in this study, such research can be conducted.

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